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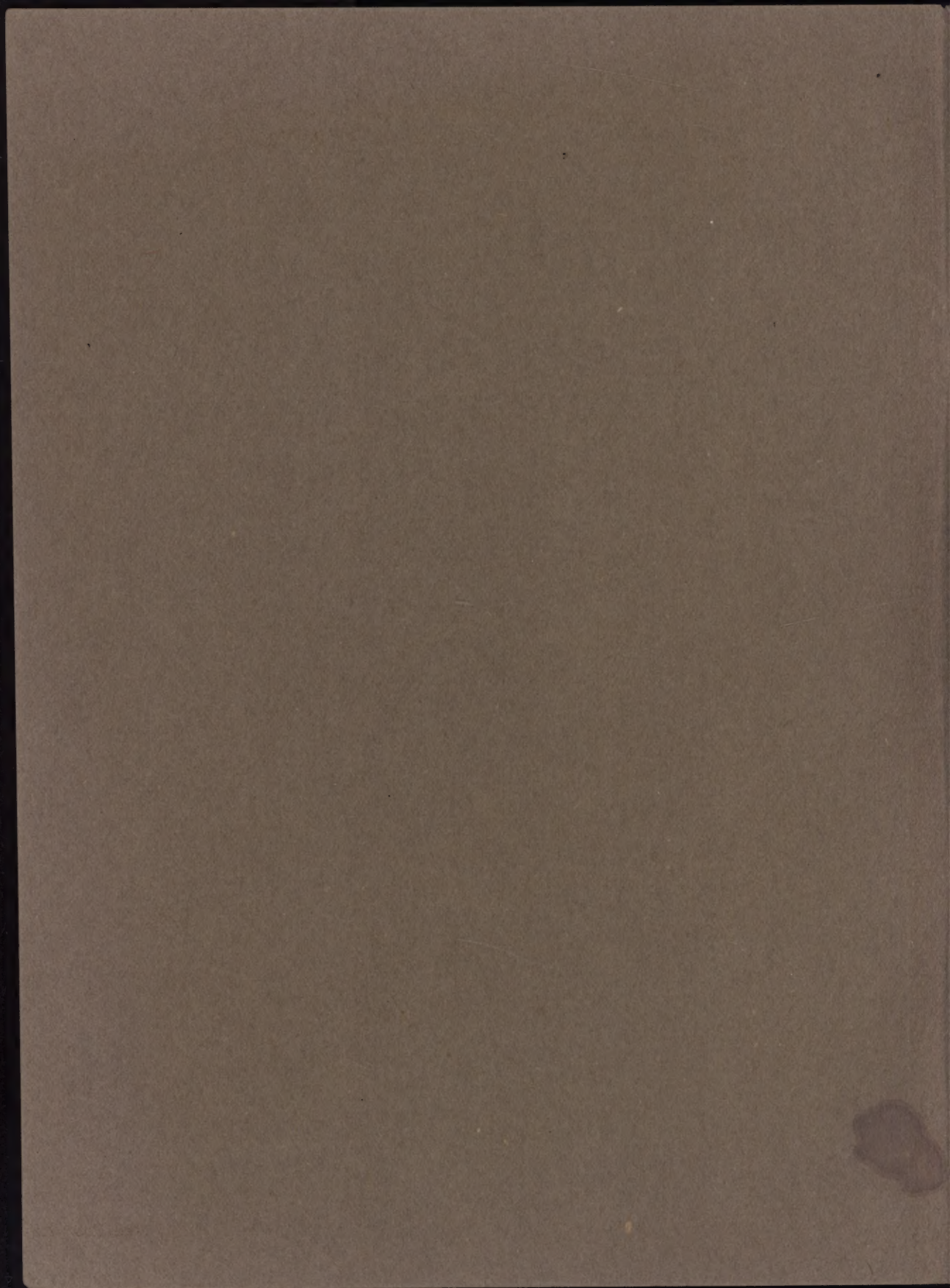
THE SCRIP

NOTES ON ART

FEBRUARY 1906



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VOLUME I.

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CONTENTS

THE MORAL AND DIVINE LAW	Frontispiece
Decoration by John La Farge	
JOHN LA FARGE'S DECORATIONS AT ST. PAUL	<i>E. L. Cary</i> 137
Illustrated	
THE MAKING OF A DECORATION	142
Lecture by A. B. Wenzel	
Illustrated	
GENERAL CULTURE IN ART	146
Lecture by Wm. B. Van Ingen	
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PHOTO- MECHANICAL PROCESSES	<i>Frank Weitenkampf</i> 150
THE GALLERIES	153
The National Academy of Design	
The Boston Museum of Fine Arts	
ARTS AND CRAFTS	157
(Edited by ANNIE M. JONES)	
The Potter's Art <i>Anne Gregory Van Briggie</i>	
The "Little Galleries" of the Photo-Secession	
. <i>Roland Rood</i>	
BOOK REVIEWS	165
NOTES	167

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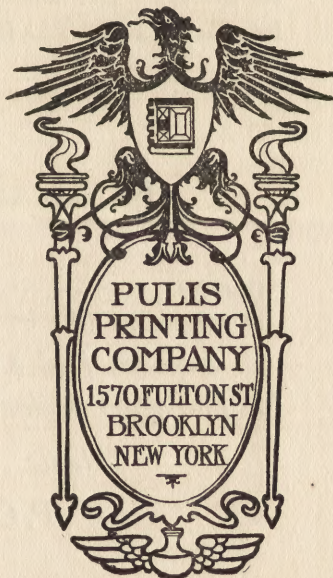
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It will contain articles on

art subjects of permanent importance, and translated or epitomized accounts from authoritative sources of the contemporary art of France, Germany, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries. A list of the current art exhibitions for the month will be given in each number, and the three regular departments will be devoted to notes on these exhibitions, to notes on the development of the Arts and Crafts movement, and to reviews of books on art.

THE SCRIP will be published at fifteen cents a number, or a dollar and a half a year. This price brings it within the reach of a public debarred from the costly foreign and domestic magazines of interest and authority, while its contents will be kept as nearly as possible on a level with these in selection if not in variety of subject. Its motto: "*Let nothing great pass unsaluted or unenjoyed,*" indicates its general aim. The first year begins with the number for October, 1905.

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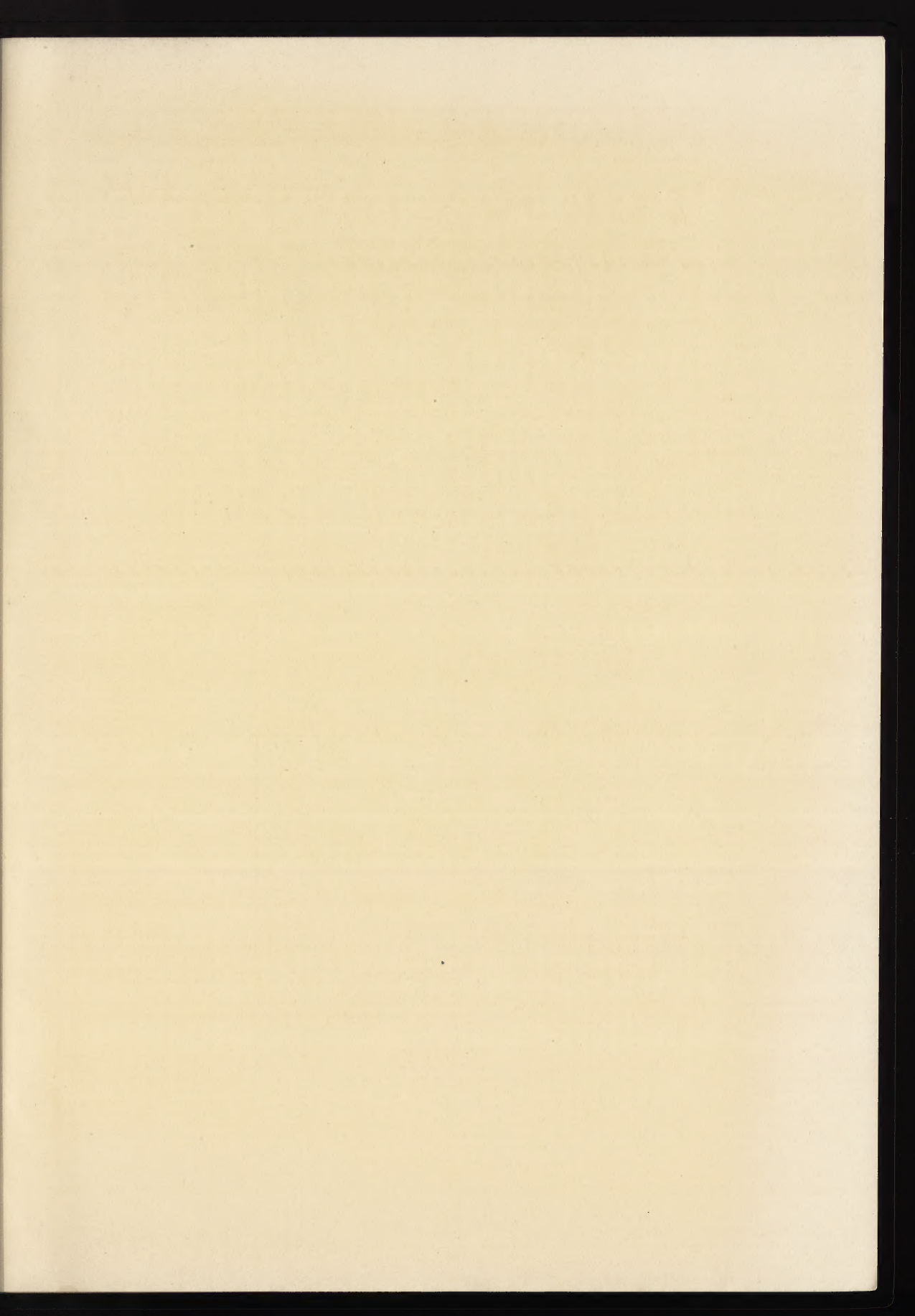
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"THE MORAL AND DIVINE LAW"

THE SCRIP

Conducted by ELISABETH LUTHER CARY

Vol. I

February, 1906

No. 5

John La Farge's Decorations at St. Paul

By Elisabeth Luther Cary

THE four decorations recently made by John La Farge for the Supreme Court Room of the new capitol at St. Paul, Minnesota, may pertinently be considered from the standpoint of the student of thought as well as from the standpoint of the student of painting as such. It is far from my intention to discuss their technical qualities, although these seem to me most suggestive and informing, and might offer, I should think, a tempting field for theory to practical students of decorative art. The decorations are there, however, to be seen, and such comment as a lay critic might make on the resonant colour harmonies, on the depth of the hues and the propriety of their relations, on the promise they hold of continuing rich and full and vibrating after the long passage of time, would fall somewhat flat in the absence of the visible object and in its presence is unnecessary. But few words may properly be said, perhaps, to emphasize what seems to me the special message of these remarkable compositions to the modern art student concerning his attitude of mind

toward the past. There are for him two ways of considering the past in his art, and for the sake of mere convenience we may let Puvis de Chavannes exemplify for us the first of these ways, since among the painters whose work is well-known to Americans he represents the most significant contrast to Mr. La Farge in this particular matter. In the Boston Public Library are some paintings by Puvis de Chavannes which rouse the indignation of patriotic Americans who have travelled where that master's greatest work is to be seen, because they are so far from being his greatest work. A number of them, however, worthily enough represent his characteristic temper toward the literary and historical material with which he deals, for like most of the really important people who have expressed themselves about art the subject counts with him as an integral part of the performance. One of these decorations, it will generally be remembered, shows the figure of Plato in earnest talk with a somewhat languid youth leaning against a marble column. The Greek architecture contributes to the classic formality of the design, a man is seated in an indolent attitude on the steps of a portico, in the distance are other figures, it is springtime or summer, the sky is blue and flowers are growing along the edge of a garden-plot in the foreground. The gesture of Plato is noble, and, although the painting is abstract in character, the scene conveys a distinct impression of lofty intercourse between thinking people in an environment of lovely landscape. Yet the impression on the mind is not that of reality—at least not that of present reality. The past has never seemed so far in the distance as when the eyes are resting upon this embodiment of it. The figures exist as dreams and visions, and the whole might be the echo of a fairy-tale never quite believed, and belonging to a time of childhood when even

present realities had not put off their veil of mystery. This, then, is the effect of the method followed by Puvis de Chavannes and by many other modern painters upon the facts of history which they record in a more or less symbolical manner. It sends the past back into the region of mists, farther back than it is in our mental conception if we have cared at all for its written records. It is not even symbolically alive, it does not represent forces that have continued to the present time, and will continue for generations after we are dead. Beautiful as it may be as decoration, and how beautiful that is only the passionate student of the work of Puvis in France can rightly say, it fails to arouse the inspiriting sense of an infrangible unity between what has been and what is to be which is perhaps the most consoling factor in human experience.

When, on the other hand, an artist with Mr. La Farge's tendencies toward interrogation of the whole ancestral race from which we derive our ideas and impressions takes a subject from the past for his decorative purposes, something quite different happens. The past—it may be the Greek past or the Chinese past or the French past—suddenly bears down upon us with all its correlated suggestions of kinship with the present, with all its stored vitality and significance, and especially with its power of influencing our mood. The four decorations for the St. Paul Capitol bear the titles *The Moral and Divine Law*, *The Relation of the Individual to the State*, *The Recording of Precedents*, and *The Adjustment of Conflicting Interests*, thus presenting a sequence of historical moments marking the change from ethical justice as determined by the promptings of conscience to a more or less arbitrary form of organized law. The painting second in order, *The Relation of the Individual to the State*, has for its theme the

discussion of the *Republic* between Socrates and his friends, as it is related in Plato's book of that name. It is, therefore, like the painting by Puvis in the Boston Library, a representation of a Grecian scene in which the figures are those of literature and history. But, unlike Puvis, Mr. LaFarge has placed on his canvas not the summary representation of impersonal types, but a kind of portrait of the scene which may never have occurred just as he has painted it, but which might have occurred, which might have made precisely that glowing picture for some interested yet alien bystander coming suddenly into the brightness and beauty of the wonderful island at its most wonderful period. A serenity of mood, a courtesy of manner, a sense of festival and wise cheer pervade the canvas, making us think of those amazing talks of Socrates as contemporaneous rather than classic. No definite story is told, but a general truth about the temper of the time and people is worked subtly into all the elements of the painting—the colour, the choice of the open air and sunlight for a setting, the idle handsome girl who has paused to catch a word or merely curiously to observe, the fine horses plunging up the hill and the young charioteer indifferent to all but his driving. Socrates stands within the exedra talking perhaps to the eldest son of his host who, resting on the marble seat, listens with an air of politic reserve. A sophist stands by in readiness to interrupt. The gesture of Socrates is explanatory and his face, ugly and serene, has the look of wisdom. The landscape is full of gladness with sunshine pouring over the purple hills and through the green foliage. The rich dress of the wealthy citizen's son and the simpler robes of the philosopher bear their suggestion, and it is possible for the onlooker to play continually with the hints of meaning and allusion lurking behind the frank gayety and splendour of the painting.



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"THE RELATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE STATE



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"THE RECORDING OF PRECEDENTS"

In the next picture—*The Recording of Precedents*—we enter even more significantly into the life of the intellectual past to make it for the moment our own. The learned Confucious, himself a lover of the Past, sits pondering his annotations to a roll of manuscript stretched upon his knee, his pupils and disciples about him, and for a background rocks and trees and a little cascade falling over the stones into a tranquil pool. This is the semi-artificial, entirely symbolic garden landscape of China. Near the teacher lies a musical instrument—the *kin*—on which it was his habit to play before entering upon discussion. All the people in the picture are reasonably young, and, with the exception of the servant or messenger whose face we cannot see, have physiognomies moulded and stamped by habits of thought. Even without any knowledge of the archaeological details by which the composition is enriched for those who already are richly informed, it is possible to get from it the uplifting sense of homage rendered to a still living spirit—the spirit of civilization born among “famous men and our fathers who were before us.” There must be a strong and special charm in work that not only refers us to the memory of past greatness, but actually resurrects it and brings it before us in a human and recognizable likeness. In art as elsewhere the great mysteries are the giving of life and the taking of life and the awakening of the dead. Perhaps the artist who can breathe into dead names the life that once was theirs is the greatest of his kind—he belongs at all events indisputably to the “makers” and his work is good to have with us if for nothing else than to remind us that genius is humble and remembering.

For this reason then, the people who pass through the St. Paul capitol will not be far amiss if they regard these mural decorations with all their decorative magnificence, their sure-

ness of method and their mighty colour harmonies, as inextinguishable torches to light the many mansions of other traditions than ours and other ways of reasoning about justice and the law. "Conception," said Rossetti, to one of his young followers, "fundamental brainwork, that is what makes the difference in all art! Work your metal as much as you like, but first take care that it is gold and worth working."

Mural Decoration

[The following lectures are a continuation of the series to be given before the Art Student's League of New York this winter. By the kind permission of the League and of the lecturers they are printed in *THE SCRIP*. The first lecture, which was by Kenyon Cox, appeared in the January issue. Mr. Wenzell's lecture is interesting as showing a practical application of the general ideas suggested by Mr. Cox. Mr. Van Ingen's is seriously curtailed by the necessary omission of his numerous illustrative sketches, but it touches upon one of the most important elements of an artist's equipment. —*Editor.*]

THE MAKING OF A DECORATION: FROM AN INFORMAL LECTURE BY A. B. WENZELL

IN speaking of the decoration made by Mr. Blum and myself for the New Amsterdam theatre, I shall have to begin by relating certain difficulties that occurred at the outset. The first idea was that the central lunette, over the proscenium, should be thirty-four feet wide and thirteen feet high, and the whole arrangement was made in conformity with



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"THE ADJUSTMENT OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS"



those dimensions. The sketches were made for a panel of that size and we expected to begin and complete the entire decoration within six months' time. It was decided, however, that the decoration would be more effective, would make not so much a mere spot in the theatre, if the size were increased to forty-five by eighteen feet, and when we came to make this very considerable change we found that much of the material that we had intended to use would not fit appropriately into the new space, so we were obliged to discard it and find something else that would do.

When we showed our sketches to the theatre committee, one man said to us, "How about that American flag? I thought we were going to have the American flag?" I discovered later that his idea of the decoration was to have a central figure of the Goddess of Liberty flanked by Mrs. Siddons and other heroines of the drama, and it was not without a struggle that he yielded to our very different conception. That is a situation that you will be likely to run against frequently enough after you have entered upon your career.

Our own idea was to find some theme suitable to the theatre, then to make a composition adapted to the architectural forms of the building which was a steel construction. There were, of course, no columns, so anything in the heavy architectural style would be out of keeping. We finally decided to take the drama as our subject, dividing it into its different factors: the central figure, Lyric Poetry, flanked on the left by Tradition (the tradition of the theatre), on the right by a figure of Truth; below, on the right, the figure of a Jester, and below, on the left, Chivalry represented by a knight on a horse; in the foreground a King whose crown is being taken away by Death; the love-story of a young girl and a knight; fairies, babes in the wood, etc., until the entire

space was satisfactorily filled. The main idea was—taking the construction of the theatre into consideration—to start from the centre as a base and make by supplementary lines, not, of course, too definite, a couple of circles, so that looking up the composition you will see all the figures lending themselves to the circular form, and all the lines finally converging to the upright centre.

After the general plan of the composition was decided, studies had to be made for the individual figures, draperies, etc., sometimes as many as a dozen studies for a single figure, and at least two hundred and fifty in all—and it was ten months instead of six before it was finished! Not all the delay was due to the change in size, however, disconcerting as that was. The changes that took place while the painting was going on consumed a great deal of time. For example, the theatre committee came up one day to see the picture in progress. In the group of the King and Death I had thought of representing Death by a skeleton whose ivory-colored bones would make a contrasting pattern against the steel blue trappings of the knight and horse behind them. This arrangement was all sketched in, but the committee exclaimed in horror. A skeleton, they said, would not for an instant be tolerated in a New York theatre; therefore it had to go and a substitute was found for it in a rather shadowy figure in white diaphanous draperies.

Of course many details were left to be worked out on the canvas. For instance, we needed something to bind the upper and lower parts of the composition together without interfering with the individual figures. A sort of swinging line was chosen with a leaf form that runs along with it, such as one sees in the Bayeux tapestries. It is interesting in looking at the decoration to observe this line and note how



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Decorations by A. B. Wenzel for the New
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it helps to make the whole satisfactory to the eye by correcting the sense of difference in plane that would otherwise be felt. It is, on this account, perhaps one of the most important things in the decoration.

In making our studies, we were not, you must know, free to pose a figure in any position which seemed to us fine. There were strict limitations to observe. The crucial test in every case was whether it conformed to the general scheme, suited the given space and bore its proper relation to all the other parts. Frequently, on this account alone, we were obliged to choose a pose that did not by any means seem to us the finest. After this was all determined the matter of the painting was chiefly one of physical labour. Refinements of execution such as are proper to portrait-painting would not be in order here. The tone and the colour take their place. In this instance the colour was in a very high key to conform to the colour scheme used throughout the theatre. In fact colours that had to be contrasted with pure white to tell at all upon the palette proved quite strong and decided when we put them on the walls, so high did we keep the general scale.

In the side panels, after rejecting a number of ideas, the treatment all seemed at last to fall into the plan of the big lunette. The difficulty was to find something that would not only accord with this but serve as a foil to it, and the problem was finally solved by treating the panels more or less as mere ornament. The lower part of each panel is broken by an arch, and makes an ugly space difficult to manage. To do away with the monotony of an ornamental pattern a figure was necessary, but as it had to be placed above the break in the arch it looked small and slight even though it was seven feet high. We introduced, therefore, horses in

the Greek style to serve as a background and fill up the space, which they do very successfully, I think. For the lower portion a seated figure naturally suggested itself, and the outside spaces were filled with verdure. But to arrive at the solution of this apparently very simple problem cost me more work than anything in the lunette itself, I believe, as time was lacking for the following out of our first idea which was to treat each panel separately, and to break away from an inclination and look at a thing from an entirely new standpoint is always full of difficulty.

THE VALUE OF GENERAL CULTURE IN ART: FROM
AN INFORMAL LECTURE BY WM. B. VAN INGEN

IF I were asked to express in one word the characteristic differentiating the artist from the business man posing in the garb of an artist, I should say sincerity. To my way of thinking the artist is a man who does his best and then gets the most that he can for it, while the business man gets the most he can and then does as well as he can for it—it is a mere question of precedence. In my experience the art student is usually sincere, and it is not my purpose to exalt sincerity to you, but rather to point out the dangers into which your very sincerity may lead you, and to indicate as the chief preventive to such dangers general culture. Not that general culture will make artists of you—far from it; but it will positively affect your work in special instances and also will keep you from directing your attention exclusively to technique in your efforts to be sincere. The great point is to get the idea that technique is merely a language in which each man must express his individual thoughts, and

is not to be copied indiscriminately. The principles taught at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, for example, are the best in the world, but when students go there and copy merely the Parisian methods of working and come back to apply these to problems encountered in New York their work turns out entirely unsuited to New York conditions. When I myself went to Paris to study under a justly distinguished artist because I was told that he would teach me how to paint, I found that he did not paint at all in a way to express what was in my mind, but only what was in his mind, therefore I left him.

How are we to get at the general culture to which we look for help in expressing our ideas? Through literature, for one thing. I have paid some attention to literature, and have found that it exercised a direct influence upon my work. Beware, however, of what literary people write about the art of painting read, on the contrary, what they write about literary style. What a writer says about writing is well worth listening to, and I suppose to be really consistent we should argue that a painter must confine himself to painting what he knows about painting. Nevertheless when a painter writes about painting he is writing from his own experience and his writings ought to be valuable to us. Delacroix, for instance, recorded in his journal innumerable studies of men and movements, he made a careful study of Rubens, and expressed himself freely about living painters, and about that great conflict of classicism and romanticism that took place in his time. This journal of three volumes punctiliously kept through forty years ought surely to be of some service to us. La Farge whom I consider the greatest living artist, bar none, has written a great deal and I have read everything that he has written many times over, with the greatest pos-

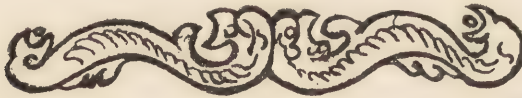
sible advantage. Years ago I worked with him, and certain things that he said to me then that puzzled me, clear up as I read his books now. He has written on Ruskin, on Taine's theory that the habitat makes the man, on Puvis de Chavannes;—what a great artist thinks on these subjects ought to interest you. He said once: "Those of you who are not familiar with the colour demonstrations of Prof. Rood—should be." The idea of reading a book on theories of colour did not greatly appeal to me, but I thought La Farge a sufficiently high authority to be heeded, so I read Professor Rood's book and then wrote to him and in consequence he showed me his demonstrations, and proved to me many interesting things—among them that red, yellow and blue are not primary colours and that yellow and blue do not make green. I learned later that Rood's theory was the scientific basis of one impressionist's use of colour—that Monet is a student of his work, and that Pissarro habitually carried his book under his arm—to use Pissarro's own words. Rood naturally does not claim that he will make you a great colourist, but knowledge of his theories is not going to interfere with your becoming one and may help you out of some difficult places.

Literature is not, of course, the only road to general culture. Knowledge of the way the great masters have worked in all times and all nations will help you. I have gained much by the study of Japanese perspective, especially as illustrated in Hokusai's hundred views of Fujiyama. I have worked of late years chiefly on decorations in big buildings through which people pass hurriedly with hardly a moment to give to my painting. To seize their attention I must hit hard and Hokusai who was an artist of the popular school

who worked swiftly and directly has shown me more than one way of doing this.

Study also the great Italian decorators to get at the principle on which they worked. You will meet with a great many surprises in perspective but when you find that a great man has done a thing make up your mind it was right without troubling to set up your authority against his. In the art of words the usage that great writers make of a word defines the meaning of that word. The one really great English dictionary—the Oxford dictionary—is based on the recognition of this fact. We should study the masters of painting in the same spirit. What they have done settles meanings. We can learn too from masters in arts allied to yet different from our own. Frederick Law Olmstead who built Central Park, laid it out with the idea of making pictures that would be right in fifty years from the time in which he worked. That was in 1858, and to-day I go to Central Park with the greatest certainty of finding there beautiful motives for pictures.

There are so many things to say about general culture that I can only make a beginning, but the point I want to emphasize is that it will help you in your art—that you will learn through it what other men have thought and done and thus broaden your view. If you do not care for what other men think—why should you be here listening to me?



The Significance of the Photo-mechanical Processes

By Frank Weitenkamp

REPRODUCTIVE processes based on the initial use of the camera have come to play a part of overwhelming importance in the illustration of books and magazines. These processes are widely varying, differing in method, degrees of excellence, and in expensiveness. And these variations are found not only between the various processes, but also within the individual ones. There is an exceedingly great difference, for example, between the best and the cheapest half-tones. So that one cannot group all these "photomechanical" processes in one class, with no reference to good and bad.

We have become used to the complaint that the camera has driven out the artistic element in the reproductive arts. Especially is this urged when the decay of wood-engraving is deplored. Yet the wood-engravers first hailed the camera as an ally in the effort to attain realism even to the extent of reproducing the brush-marks rather than the spirit of a painting. The wood-engraving replaced the line engraving on steel and was in its turn replaced by the process based on the photograph, in the progressive pursuit of quicker and cheaper reproductive methods. If the loss of artistic effect in the course of the latter change is deplored, the fact must not be overlooked that the artistic individuality of the wood-engraver was surely not in every case one worth preserving, and that his production was systematized, in co-operative shop methods, as a business as well as an art.

Perhaps the principal claims of the new processes are cheapness and truth. But the easy view that the camera does not lie admits of the modification that it tells half-truths. This is certainly so when the statement of the camera is translated into that of the reproductive processes, for these processes are not only based on the use of a mechanically produced grain to hold the ink, but the hand of man intervenes directly in the half-tone, in photogravure, in the three-colour process. The most satisfactory reproduction of a painting is the photograph, and that does not come within the province of these notes. The next best is the collographic print (*Licht-druck*, heliotype), in which there is practically no grain. But this is generally used only for small and comparatively expensive editions. The photogravure, being engraved in intaglio, must likewise be printed separately from the text. The half-tone and the line etching remain as the only practicable processes in which pictures and text can be printed simultaneously, and of these, the half-tone is most in evidence, perhaps, in our books and magazines. In the latter, the checkerboard effect of even the finest screen has led to experiments, notably a recent German one, to attain more pleasing results by using a screen with irregular lines. However, the high lights in the best work to-day are scraped out by hand, and the abruptness of the vignetted outline can be softened by the same agency. Halftones in our best magazines are often considerably touched up by hand. So we have again, at least to some extent, the personal impression or interpretation of the wielder of the burin, who, moreover, is apt to be one of the very wood engravers whom the new processes had put out of business.

Perhaps one of the most significant and essential purposes of these new processes is the cheap production of pictorial

documents. We may be thrilled, perhaps, by a dramatically conceived picture of a battle, but a half-tone after a good photograph of some individual scene in the battle itself strikes us with an intensity of human interest which (if, indeed, the picture is not "faked") has the merit of at least showing life as it is and falling in with realistic tendencies.

It is well to remember the limitations of this process, limitations which are many and are in many instances glossed over by meretricious tricks and miserable subterfuges. Witness such an abomination as a black and white beach with green waves or so-called colour-prints economically produced by the use of a few liberally applied tints or even simply a judiciously employed red.

It is well to remember that there cannot yet be either a perfect reproduction or a colour photography. For what is often called colour photography is simply a reproduction, by the half-tone process, of three or more photographs taken through prepared sheets, each one of which eliminates all but a certain colour, the resultant plates being printed in inks of corresponding colours. This implies not simply a mechanical reproduction of a photograph, but the production of plates which are usually considerably touched up by hand, the selection of coloured inks for which is not, of course, determined automatically by any chemical process, but is the result of a choice, on the part of the printer, among a certain series of inks.

It is much better to understand these limitations clearly, and not claim for, nor expect from, these processes more than they can render. For even then their resources are sufficient to make us thankful indeed for what is given us, while nursing our optimism in the hope for improvement.

The Galleries

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION

The eighty-first annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design is far from sensational. The pictures are well-grouped so far as their effect upon each other is concerned, and the walls present a certain harmonious tone, but the lack of personal style in most of the work shown and the presence of a quality that can only be characterized as perfunctoriness are dispiriting. Possibly the general tameness would be less obvious if Mr. Borglum's *Horses of Diomedes* were not among the sculpture exhibits. This prodigious group is so much the embodiment of pure energy—energy both of conception and execution—it is so much the potent artistic idea carried with apparent impetuosity and exuberance to its completion, that the usual more or less conventional art of accomplished and knowing, but we dare say not overwhelmingly interested, painters suffers greatly by close proximity to it. It forms, perhaps not altogether justly but quite inevitably, a species of touchstone to the neighboring exhibits. "*The Wind in the East*" by Emil Carlsen, is one of the pictures that stand up bravely under the comparison. The tumultuous breakers torn by the opposing wind are vigorous in colour and show mastery of the difficult problems of form and movement presented by such a subject. Among the landscapes that by J. Alden Weir which has received the Inness medal shows a concentration of attention upon values in sunlight. The composition is not impressive and the pattern made by the stones is perhaps somewhat lacking in distinction, but the colour of

the greens in both the sun and the shadow is full of the gayety of nature under such atmospheric conditions. *Summer Morning* by Leonard Ochtman is a characteristic study of the cool loveliness of the early day when the ground is beginning to flush under the dawn. Mr. Ochtman as time goes on gets farther and farther away from his pigment, while the topographical accuracy of his early studies of nature is still seen in his exquisite drawing of sloping hillsides and clumps of low growth. *Spring Afternoon* by Clark G. Voorhees, which receives the third Hallgarten prize, is a delicate drawing, monotonous in colour, but with a pleasant effect of breeze stirring through young branches. *The Passing Storm* by Walter Shirlaw is admirable in its suggestion of movement without violence or restlessness. *Steam and Smoke* by Henry B. Snell recalls his treatment of a similar subject in the recent Water Colour Club exhibition, but is less subtle in colour and handling. The portraits are few in number and for the most part rather uninteresting in quality. The Thomas R. Proctor prize goes to Mr. Benson's portrait of a lady in a gold-coloured gown with curious violet shadows in the flesh tones. It has neither the breadth nor charm of his best work, and has hardly sufficient force of drawing to carry at the distance necessary to make the colour agreeable. It is interesting to compare the portrait of Henry Wolf by Irving R. Wiles with that of William Thorne by John Sargent. The latter is a thoroughly sympathetic as well as a characteristically frank rendering of character, and is, of course, abounding in vitality. The forehead in Mr. Wolf's portrait is an astonishing bit of painting, and the whole face is modelled with great cleverness. Mr. Vonnoh's portrait of a lady "in costume" has refinement of

line and just misses being exquisite in colour. The light crisp brushwork on the gown is delightful.

The *Mother and Child* by Hugo Ballin, which takes the Thomas B. Clarke prize for the best figure composition, is decorative in effect and rich in colour. Other pictures, notably the portrait of Maxfield Parrish by Kenyon Cox, Mr. Koopman's *Street Scene*, Henry Oliver Walker's *Portrait of Mrs. H.*, Mr. Maynard's portrait of himself, and C. P. Gruppe's *Dutch Barnyard*, are stamped by the intelligence and general competency of the artists who painted them; but it is certainly not too much to say that the best effort of the best men is conspicuously lacking. We must look for that, probably, in the exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts

The galleries of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts offer a tempting opportunity this winter. In addition to the permanent exhibits are a number of pictures lent by Mrs. Sears, Mr. Saltonstall and others, which are of extraordinary interest and importance. Among them is the *Street-Singer* by Manet, painted at about the same period as the *Boy with the Sword* in the Metropolitan Museum of New York and thoroughly characteristic of Manet's early work. In nothing is it more striking than in the colour-scheme which is a bold and wonderful arrangement of orange, green and violet-gray. The cold Parisian green of the café door which is swung open back of the erect little figure of the girl, the warm delightful tones of the grayish jacket that hangs loosely from her shoulders and the light skirt lifted slightly to show a white under skirt, the coral earrings and rich red cherries compose in an absolutely satisfactory harmony not less beguiling to the eye

than the same harmony carried out in fainter tones as so often we find it in the work of the old Japanese print makers.

Another very interesting loan is Rossetti's *Sir Tristram and La Belle Yseult drinking the Love Drink*. This is the replica of a cartoon done for a stained-glass window. It was painted in 1867 before Rossetti's health failed and while he was still in possession of the magnificent colour-sense shown at the fullness of its splendour in the *Lilith* of Mr. Samuel Bancroft's collection. The peacock feather in the vase unites the colours of the picture, in which deep resonant blues and greens predominate. A head by Rossetti dated 1849 is also shown. It is lightly drawn on canvas and has the suavity of the Raphael so despised by its author. In the same room with the Rossettis is hung a water-colour by John La Farge of a Samoan boy standing on the prow of a boat, holding back of his head a scarf of intensely blue drapery which floats billowing on the wind. It is not known how long this group of masters of colour will be on exhibition, but probably at least for a year.

The election of Mr. Edward Robinson, former director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, to the position of assistant director of the Metropolitan Museum of New York, is full of promise for the welfare and progress of the latter, which seems now on the point of putting away childish things. Sir Purdon Clarke's idea of establishing in it a representative collection of American art is one that will ensure for it an historic value and will be an intelligent appeal to the national feeling that is not too strong with us at best, and is sometimes perverted where it is strongest to objects the least worthy.

Arts and Crafts Department

Edited by Annie M. Jones

THE POTTER'S ART

I N these days of the revival of the handicrafts, pottery, which is perhaps the oldest of all the arts, is one of the latest in which popular interest has been awakened. With the introduction of porcelain into Europe in the early eighteenth century and the founding and development of the great factories for the manufacture of both fine and coarse ware, the making of art pottery was pushed into the background and the useful side rather than the artistic was emphasized in the articles for household use. The lover of the picturesque might pick up in the old country bits of no great technical merit but with charm of colour and quaintness of form; in this country until recently ugliness has been with few exceptions the chief characteristic of the pottery made. But within the past twenty-five years the appreciation of the possibilities of pottery has grown with increasingly rapid strides. Potteries have sprung up in this country as well as in Europe, testifying to the awakened interest in this point of household decoration. The Paris Salons make each year a brave showing of work of high artistic and technical merit and there are several potteries in this country which keep pace with them in all points, including individuality, which is the keynote in the making of pottery. The individuality which is behind each of the potteries in this country is very marked, coming sometimes from the brain of one man or woman, sometimes from a group of sympathetic workers with one aim in view. Many potters

have the technical and artistic knowledge to carry on the entire work themselves; in other cases the work is divided, one being responsible for the glazes, another for the shapes and designs of the pots. The work now covers such a large field that it is rather difficult for one person to keep it all in hand. Pottery claims a place in the garden and in the building of houses as well as in interior decoration and the great variety in glazes, both bright and dead, permits of innumerable interesting effects.

His work holds for the potter a never ending fascination; to the general public it is shrouded in mystery which may to some extent be cleared by a glimpse of some of his problems and his methods of work. He must be before all things an enthusiast, for experiment after experiment and failure after failure must come before success is attained and new and never ending problems attend him from the beginning to the end of his career. First of all, the clay and the glaze must be fitted to one another, for all clays and all glazes do not agree, and upon their capacity for harmonious work depends the technical excellence of the finished ware. The clay is rarely used as it comes from the clay beds. After its deficiencies have been discovered, it is carefully weighed and various ingredients added to make it suitable for the glaze which it is to receive. It then goes through a process of thorough mixing, grinding, cleaning. The water must be pressed from it and after it has hardened sufficiently to handle, it is ready for the throwing wheel. The forming of the pot from the clay is perhaps the most interesting step in the making of pottery and the methods used differ very little from those of the earliest days, save that electricity is now often used to turn the wheel; there are still, however, many potters who prefer to use a "kick wheel" which is worked by the foot. The

thrower fastens his drawing upon the wall before him, calculates how large a piece of clay is needed, centers the ball upon the wheel and from the shapeless mass draws out his pot. Although he may aid himself in measuring certain points with callipers, it takes a trained eye to follow a subtle line and to produce the same feeling which exists in the drawing. A slight change of line or proportion may entirely ruin an idea. Some throwers finish their pieces as they work, some throw more roughly and leave them to be finished by the turner, who, after the clay has hardened a little, centers the clay once more upon the wheel and turns the pot to the exact line.

The thrown piece, called "green ware," is now ready, when thoroughly dried, for the first firing. If, however, the piece is to be decorated in the green state it passes on into the hands of the artist, who draws his design upon the pot. If the design is to be raised from the pot, it may be modelled with clay or painted with slip, which is finely ground, liquid clay. To the slip, colour may be added which will show through a clear glaze; or if the decoration is to be flat, colours may be applied directly to the green ware, usually through the medium of thin slip. Great care must be taken to have the pot and the clay or slip in the right condition, otherwise the added clay will crack.

If more than one piece of a certain shape or design is desired, a plaster mould may be made from either a thrown or modelled piece.

Into the plaster mould, made in several pieces and held together by strong wires, is poured the slip, or liquid clay. The plaster absorbs the water until a wall of clay stands within the mould which is removed as soon as the clay is firm enough to stand without support. The pot when it comes

from the mould must be carefully retouched, all traces of seams removed and the design sharpened and remodelled. A number of reproductions may be made in this way, until the mould loses through use its clearness. There is less danger of cracking in the fire of a piece made by means of a mould, the clay being of uniform dampness and drying evenly.

The first firing at an end, the biscuit ware goes into the glaze room and is first glazed on the inside and then on the outside. There are various methods of applying the glaze, by means of pouring, dipping, and applying by means of the atomizer. The glaze may contain the colouring matter or may be clear, permitting the underglaze painting to show through. The matter of glazing is one which requires much mechanical skill in order to apply exactly the right amount. Too heavy a glaze may cause the pot to crack in the fire or it may flow in an unpleasant fashion. The ware requires the most careful handling in this stage, as a jar will cause the glaze to flake off, and finger marks will show. The glazed pots are placed on stilts, small, sharply pointed, three cornered affairs, and then in the saggars, which are set in the kiln, one on top of another, sealed with wads of clay, until a bung is formed. When the kiln is finally filled the door is blocked up with brick and clay and the fires started in the fire boxes. There are various ways of determining the heat within the kiln, the usual way being by means of pyrometric cones which melt at certain degrees of temperature are reached. These cones are placed in different parts of the kiln and are watched through peep holes. The firing of the kiln is a very careful process and must be watched day and night until the fire is off. After several days of cooling the door is opened and the most exciting moment in the whole process is reached. The fire has done its work and may have surprises

in store for the potter. Although he knows how each piece should come out some eccentricity of the fire may have ruined the work of weeks or it may bring forth something beautiful beyond all expectations. An over fire will cause the glaze to flow down toward the bottom of the pot and often completely ruin colour and effect, although some of the rarest and most beautiful pieces of pottery are created by this very accident. A pot ruined by over fire is usually hopelessly ruined, an underfired piece which is rough and unpleasant in texture may usually be refired without any alteration. A pot is often fired many times before the desired effect is obtained.

The longer a potter works the more clearly he realizes the difficulty of producing a perfect piece of pottery; innumerable accidents may happen; if the conditions within the kiln are not exactly right and the harmony between clay and glaze not perfect the ware may craze, and a craze with its ugly irregular lines is very different from the regularity of a beautiful crackle; the glaze may bubble up and blister; it may shiver and chip off, it may be full of pinholes; it may jump off, indeed carelessness in any part of the work and the freakishness of the fire will show in the finished pot.

Anne Gregory Van Briggles.

THE "LITTLE GALLERIES" OF THE PHOTO-SECESSION.

To a large number of people the word photography stands for all that is anti-art, and the compound word, photo-secession, is doubtless quite meaningless. As, however, the *Photo-Secession* has recently emerged from its purely photographic environment and intends taking a place and becoming a factor in the art world at large, a few words as to its meaning, history and object may be of interest.

The *Photo-Secession* is a body of men and women who, believing that photography can be made a means of art expression in every sense, have banded themselves into an association in a measure similar to any other art association. The word "secession" is intended to signify that these photographers hold views considerably at variance with those of the ordinary camera-worker, and therefore have seceded. The Secession has existed only a few years, but in that time (largely under the guidance of its central figure, Alfred Stieglitz) has established itself as the leading "photo-pictorial" force in America, and has taken a place second to none in Europe. It now feels that having won all possible laurels at photographic exhibitions, the time has come to extend its cult. With this idea in view, rooms at 291 Fifth avenue, New York, have been engaged and named "The Little Galleries"; and in them may be seen not merely the best American photographic work, but also the best foreign. The Galleries opened (November twenty-fourth, 1905) with an exhibit of Secession work that had been shown at the Lewis and Clark Exposition; and, at this time of writing, the plan is to follow with other American, French, Viennese, German and British exhibits.

The discussion as to what the true realm of art is, and whether photography should logically be kept out or sophistically be squeezed into this very august realm, is one that I do not intend entering upon. I propose instead merely to suggest lines of thought possibly leading to the conclusion that photography may after all be an art. Go to the Little Galleries and look at some print that pleases you; then ask yourself if the sensation or emotion that it awakens in you is the aesthetic one. You undoubtedly will answer "yes," but may add: "Because this print evokes in me the aesthetic sen-

sation it does not at all follow that it is art; beautiful clouds and other natural objects produce the same effect upon me; this is merely a copy of something beautiful and in no sense art; it is not the creation of the photographer, nor has he in any way combined his personal thought with it. I admit that the man who made it has shown exquisite taste in his choice of subject and the particular arrangement of the composition, and perhaps even he may have made the composition; but this in front of me cannot be art because with machinery it is impossible to select, exaggerate and leave out, and without selection, exaggeration, and omission, the thought and personality of the artist cannot be expressed."

That the photographer has not the power of exaggeration I admit; and also that without exaggeration there can be neither construction nor penetrative imagination; nor can a natural composition be altered in photography; but that the photographer has no power of selection and omission is not true; he has a certain amount of such power which anyone attempting serious work with the camera soon becomes aware of. In the first place every different make of lens produces a different result, one which gives much or one which gives little detail may be chosen, one which makes opaque shadows or one which renders their transparency. Also the focus may be adjusted to direct attention to some special source of interest, and it may be sharp or blurred, thus accentuating or eliminating details. Alterations in the amount of time the negative is exposed are responsible for endless variations in the resultant values; and, again, the method of developing and the developing agents used will introduce numerous qualities corresponding to nature or not, as the case may be. When the negative has been produced the work has hardly been begun, for the printing has become so complicated that

merely to enumerate the varieties would more than fill this page—but each different method with correspondingly different results is at the option of the pictorialist, so that when he has finished, the result he shows us is one, which, twenty times over, he has had it in his power to alter and direct into an entirely different channel, and which therefore must express a certain amount of his personality—if not, why does the work of a particular man frequently present such characteristics as make it—like the work of the painters—recognizable at sight as his own, and in no danger of being confused with another's? To all this the reply may be made: "What you claim may very well be true, but it is a very restricted art that you describe." Surely it is restricted, but still art, and it is these restrictions in part that make it interesting. It is more wonderful that even a small quantity of artistic effect should be obtained with machinery than that a very large quantity should be produced by hand; and if you do not find perfection or anything approaching perfection, remember that the conception of producing art by machinery is but of yesterday, and the art itself is in its infancy.

In conclusion let me say that the absurd mistake should be avoided of attempting to compare these prints with paintings, a comparison suggested by certain writers as the fair one. It would be just as ridiculous to compare a pen drawing with an oil painting, or the effect produced by means of a piano with that of a whole orchestra—compare these photographs with charcoal drawings or with etchings and then judge. But whatever the conclusion is, it should not be hastily drawn, as the photo-secessionists have given their earnest work and best thought to their problem and have presented something which to say the least is most valuable as an art educator.

Roland Rood.

Book Reviews

(Old Pewter, Brass, Copper, and Sheffield Plate: By N. Hudson Moore. F. A. Stokes Company. New York. 1905. Price \$2.00 net, postpaid \$2.18.)

In this as in his earlier books Mr. Moore has given a full and succinct account of his subject. In some respects, pewter, brass, copper, and Sheffield plate are more interesting to the collector than the precious metals. They reflect more precisely the everyday life of their time and are intimately connected with humble and homelike occupations. The old New England chafing dish or "copper furnace", in which charcoal was burned; the great warming-pans reminding us of the cold houses in which our grandmothers slept; the great coffee-urns speaking eloquently of the fragrant Java now so impossible to get, and the large families and large hospitality of earlier times; the pewter money-box or "Pirley Pig" of the thrifty Scot; the pewter tankards of Germany, and the snuff-boxes and patch-boxes and buckles and buttons fashionable in the days of the Georges, are all suggestive of their special usefulness in a past that cannot become alien, so close is it to the human interests that are permanent. Mr. Moore combines with his details of history, technical accounts of processes of manufacture and minute descriptions of characteristic features with the intention of making his work useful to collectors. His text, which is both interesting and thorough, is reinforced by numerous illustrations from pieces in the possession, for the most part, of museums and important collections. An appendix containing a list of the marks and names found on foreign pewter and also the names of the principal

makers with the period in which they work, is a valuable addition to the volume.

(Women Painters of the World from the Time of Caterina Vigri, 1413-1463 to Rosa Bonheur and the Present Day. Edited by Walter Shaw Sparrow. F. A. Stokes Company. New York. 1905.)

This volume is the third in the *Art and Life Library*, and is original both in idea and execution. The editor wisely has divided into groups the women painters of different countries and has had the critical notice of each prepared by a critic of authority in the country to which the group assigned to him belongs. Thus, the account of women painters in France is written by M. Bénédict, whose opinions on art are of the highest value; the chapter on the painters of Belgium is by N. Jany, etc. The importance of the book as a record and reference lies less, however, in the text than in the copious illustrations which make it possible to compare the style of one painter with another and note in detail the characteristics of each so far as these can be reproduced in black and white. The publishers have been sensible enough to limit the colour prints to a few subjects especially adapted to reproduction in flat tints and unmysterious tones. Helen Hyde's *Day Dreams*, for example, is in the original a coloured woodcut in the Japanese manner, and if it suffers by transference to a calendered paper it is still agreeable in colour as in composition and an addition to the beauty of the volume in which it is placed. The same is true to a slightly less degree of the highly decorative paintings by Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale, and the portrait in body colour by Ann Macbeth. The promise is held out of another volume representing more fully the women painters of the present day.

Notes

Examples of Fantin-Latour's remarkable flower painting are to be seen this month at the Knoedler Galleries, 355 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Fantin's early friendship with Whistler is well known and Whistler's discussion of the flower pictures in a letter quoted by M. Bénédict in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* is the most interesting comment that can be made on the present exhibition. He has been enlarging on his idea of colour composition, holding that the colours should seem to be embroidered upon the canvas, repeating themselves to a greater or less degree according to their importance in the composition, precisely as certain threads in the old embroideries appear and reappear in the design. Then, taking an example from Fantin's work, he continues: "In your second canvas the whole is first of all a charming pattern; moreover, there is no one who could render it like yourself. Just see how perfect it is! The background reappears in the bouquet and the table-colour creeps up into the reddish grapes to be found again in similar tones among the flowers! The reds of the fruit are repeated in many places and the green grapes—how delicate and fine in colour they are!—seek other greens in the leaves. It is a ravishing pattern, and a delicious colour scheme."

At the Montross Galleries an exhibition of some of the later work of Mr. Dewing and Mr. Tryon has given fresh opportunity for observing the still steady advance of these two painters—exceptionally endowed and from the first exacting in their technical demands upon themselves—toward breadth

of manner and richness of modelling. In Mr. Dewing's figures of to-day there may be discerned in addition to the old delicacy and firmness of line and subtlety of colour, a certain fluency in the management of the pigment, a greater amplitude and flexibility of outline and a somewhat more flowing and gracious composition. These deep-chested, slender-throated women, with their meditative dignity of pose and expression, are certainly the loveliest portraits of modernity as yet evoked from our American types.

On the fifteenth of January, 1906, *The Critic* completes its first quarter of a century. Its editor, Miss Jeanette Gilder, has shown from the beginning a lively and discriminating interest in matters of art as well as in the literary subjects to which the magazine chiefly is devoted, and it is interesting to note that the first issue of *The Critic* began with an article on William Blake. It is difficult to believe that the world moves when we read in the same number of the deplorable housing of the collections of the New York Historical Society, and in another column that "as a certain stigma attaches to American artists on account of the present illiberal and obstructive tariff on art works, it is gratifying to find the artists themselves heading a movement for the total abolition of this tariff."

The exhibition of the works of Mr. Jonas Lie, recently held at the galleries of the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, was refreshing. Mr. Lie was born in Norway in 1880 but has lived twelve years in this country. He is self-taught and brings to his painting the vigour and directness of the Scandinavian temperament. His sense of design is strong and his arrangement



"A GALE" By Jonas Lie



of masses as distinguished as though he had studied with some of the early Spaniards. A group of people on the deck of a ferry-boat watching the toil of craft in the half frozen river is specially remarkable for its disposition of spaces and management of the lights and darks. These are qualities, however, which all painters with a decorative vision share. Mr. Lie's individual quality is his power to render the spirit of a scene. His *Spring* instead of impressing the observer with the traditional sweetness of a fruit tree flushed with bloom conveys a sense of quickening life. The branches suggest it, the wind swept cloud proclaims it, the clear rain-washed sky is invigorating, the plentiful blossoms are merely the beautiful ornament of the year's returning vitality. And in his storms, his snow scenes, his autumnal trees, the same fine grasp of the integral and essential fact is manifest.

At the coming exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts a room is to be devoted to examples of work by Abbott Thayer, Tryon, Dewing and Whistler from the collection of Mr. Charles L. Freer of Detroit. The room is being re-decorated for the purpose by Mr. Dewing, and there can be no question of the extraordinary quality of the whole result. It is a most intelligent step toward introducing elements of educational and aesthetic value into the general medley of periodic exhibitions.

After a period of very curious uncertainty the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution have voted to accept the munificent offer of Mr. Charles L. Freer to bequeath to the Institution his fine collection under certain conditions. Some of these conditions will appeal strongly to students. Among other things it is required that the building to be erected with

Mr. Freer's money for the housing of the collection shall be "arranged with special regard for the convenience of students and others desirous of an opportunity for uninterrupted study," and that no charge shall ever be made for admission to the building or for the privilege of examining or studying the collections." The great advantage thus obtained for the public is too obvious for comment, and the whole offer is in the liberal and hospitable spirit of a type of collector to be regarded, we may venture to suggest, as typically American, although by no means confined to this country. Another proviso secures the re-erection of Whistler's famous Peacock Room, one of the most interesting monuments to Whistler's memory that could be made. The hesitation of the Regents may have been prompted by technical difficulties about which the mere layman is in darkness, but it certainly is a matter for rejoicing that Mr. Freer's patience sustained the trying and apparently unnecessary ordeal. He is able, no doubt, to reflect that very great institutions are not always intelligently receptive, as witness the coolness of the Louvre toward the offer made by the uncle of the late M. Cronier to turn over to it some of his wonderful examples of the 1830 school. In that case the outcome was less fortunate. M. Alexandre, who has lately referred to the incident in *Les Arts*, affirms lugubriously that the collector took umbrage and "l'affaire ne s'était pas arrangée!"

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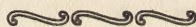
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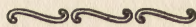
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